



Research and Reference Service

OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE CUBAN SITUATION
(As of 8 a. m.)

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SUMMARY

Relief from tension characterized the bellwether Far Eastern press comment this morning.

Editors in Japan, Malaya and the Philippines were alarmed yesterday about the dangers of immediate nuclear war. Today they seem to be less worried, basing their views on these developments:

1. Khrushchev's soft reply to Bertrand Russell and the Soviet request for a Summit Conference.
2. Khrushchev's acceptance of the U Thant proposal for a waiting period.
3. President Kennedy's instructions to Ambassador Stevenson to talk with U Thant.
4. The passage of the first Soviet tanker through the quarantine without gunfire.

For the last few days, comments beginning in the Far East have developed along similar lines elsewhere in the world as the time zones change. The available West German and Chilean observations are in line with Far East views -- the pressure has diminished.

Communist Chinese propaganda continues to damn the U.S. avoiding mention of the Soviet Union. There is some effort to organize "spontaneous" demonstrations.

Demonstrations elsewhere in the world are too spotty and small-scale at this time to show any real public agitation.

The Soviet Bloc continues to portray Khrushchev as the sweetly reasonable peacemaker. President Kennedy is criticized by the Bloc for not responding enthusiastically to U Thant's proposal.

FAR EAST

The latest editorial reaction from Far East papers is typified by Asahi's comment in Tokyo that "the worst has been averted."

Current editorials in Japan and Malaya conclude generally that Khrushchev has backed away from a challenge of the U.S. blockade. At the same time, they praise the U.S. for restraint and for bringing the case before the United Nations.

While the possibility of a deterioration of the crisis is accepted, most papers placed their emphasis on the importance of advancing the negotiations. Proposals ranged from U.S.-USSR meetings, to negotiations under U.N./U Thant auspices, or negotiations through the good offices of the non-aligned nations.

There was still a good bit of rehash of the respective US and USSR positions. Asahi in Tokyo warned the Soviet Union against "further provocations" lest her acts draw "severe criticism from the majority of world public opinion." Mainichi, noting Zorin's statement in the U.N. that the Soviet Union had no need for missile bases outside her territory, observed that the USSR should then have no objection to "on-the-spot inspection" in Cuba. The Straits Times of Malaya declared that U Thant needed some "supervisory machinery" to bring about an end to the Cuban missile bases, while the Malay-language Utusan Melayu thought it was the Security Council's responsibility to "stop the Russians from building their bases in Cuba and ask them to withdraw their arms."

Japanese papers regretted U.S. refusal to accept U Thant's proposals outright, but there was less of the carping which characterized some of the earlier comment. More understanding of the extent of the provocation to the U.S. was evident.

Comment now coming in from Indonesia is critical, as expected. The Indonesian Observer declares that "the United States will have a hard time to convince the unaligned nations of the wisdom of Kennedy's policy." Merdeka is even less restrained, charging that "the United States is dragging the whole world to the edge of a new world war."

Cambodia has not as yet commented on the crisis, but an oddly timed announcement from Phnom Penh on October 25 reported

that Cuba and Cambodia have decided to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level in order to tighten "the bonds of friendship."

Peking has little new to add. Editorials in lesser Peking papers yesterday continued to give scant mention to the Soviet Union -- a tactic now appearing also in comment from North Korea. Reportage from Peking, however, continues heavy, with an unusually detailed listing of military items banned under the U.S. blockade.

LATIN AMERICA

Chile is the first to report on press reaction to the news that the Soviet ships were turning back. The news received prompt, front-page play and resulted in a more relaxed tone characterized by the feeling that outright conflict had been avoided. Other reports from Chile indicate a slow build-up of support for the U.S. position, with some spread now to center and leftist groups.

The most solid support still appears to come from Argentina where new editorials stress the threat to the entire hemisphere and urge that "the United States position is our position."

Mexico's press reflects some ambivalence. The conservative El Universal sees the Cuban problem as a "concrete danger of the American security" and the moderate Novedades writes that the chief question is "dismantling the long-range missile bases." While there is rejection of sympathy for Cuba's actions, there seems to be no ringing approval of the U.S. position. One paper, the conservative Excelsior, even complains that the United States has extended no sympathy to the Indian people suffering from invasion from Red China.

Other scattered reports carry more offers of aid in the blockade, either of ships or bases.

CUBA

Late reports from the Cuban domestic television network indicate that the Cubans believe the crisis is entering a "second phase." A commentator said this morning that the Soviet Union appears to have "delayed the arrival of some of its ships to Cuba in order to allow time for the development of U Thant's suggestion." The commentator also notes the President's authorization of Stevenson-U Thant talks which, he says, might imply the suspension of the blockade "so that both sides can negotiate in an atmosphere devoid of war risks and pressures."

While this latest account suggests a moderation of the domestic propaganda in Cuba, other reports tell of convoys and rationing. Cuban leader Blas Roca in East Berlin gave a fiery speech in which he boasted: "We have received Soviet arms. I think that we shall continue to receive them, and we intend to continue to arm ourselves."

SOVIET BLOC

At this stage, the volume of Soviet and Satellite propaganda on the Cuban crisis is being considerably curtailed. Late issues of the Soviet press reflect the general propaganda stance of indignation, resoluteness, tranquility, Soviet strength and the citizenry's dedication to harder work.

On some of the key issues, available propaganda material still does not shed much light. There has been no apparent reaction, for instance, to the passage of the Soviet tanker. A Summit Conference, suggested by Khrushchev, was talked up in a commentary to Africa: "The USSR believes that the issue of war and peace is so vitally important that it would be useful to call a Summit Conference to disperse the threat of unleashing a nuclear war."

Thus there are faint echoes in Soviet propaganda of a stress on the need for common sense on both sides; still, these are overshadowed by the argument that if war comes the U.S. will be responsible for it.

Albania has now joined Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Poland with a formal statement on the Cuban situation. But whereas the remaining Moscow allies had condemned the U.S. quarantine and supported the USSR statement, Albania does not even mention the USSR or its cause. Yet, like all the other Bloc countries and like the USSR, Albania too conveys the idea in its media output that the present crisis directly involves only the U.S. and Cuba.

CANADA

The Canadian press supports the United States action but offers some criticism and points to the serious dangers of the situation.

The Montreal Gazette lead editorial is generally favorable stating the President could not ignore the build-up of offensive weapons in Cuba.

The Vancouver Province says the United States had no alternative and the decision is right. The Regina Leader-Post praises the President for exposing the perfidy of Khrushchev and Gromyko.

The Winnipeg Tribune warns that a collision course is set and nuclear war is inevitable unless one side deviates from its position. The Hamilton Spectator calls the President's program "forthright," and the St. John Times Globe says Canadians generally support the attitude of the President.

The Fredericton Gleaner says stopping Soviet ships on the high seas is an act of war. "Arming Cuba with missile sites is undoubtedly a threat to the Western Hemisphere," the paper adds, "but the day for unilateral action is past."

The Toronto Globe and Mail had the last word. It was critical of some tactics, but added: "Like it or not, we are on the side of the United States."

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Scattered comment ranges from solid support for Cuba in Algeria, through varying degrees of concern over U.S. actions, to outright siding with America.

The Algerian Political Bureau expressed its "absolute solidarity with the heroic people of Cuba" and condemned the blockade for constituting interference in the internal affairs of Cuba. From the UAR comes another disapproval of the blockade, contained in alleged instructions to Cairo's UN delegation from a Presidential Council meeting chaired by Nasser.

From Iraq, Qasim is quoted as regretting the "partial blockade" imposed by the U.S. because it constitutes a dangerous precedent which also tends to undermine the UN structure.

Editorial reaction from India is generally critical of the U.S. stand, with some sources pointing to the weakness of the American argument in the face of our overseas bases.

Pakistan has not reacted officially so far, but one source hints that the U.S. can expect full support. Judging from rather sparse press reaction, feelings seem to range from full acceptance of the U.S. position to concern that the situation might lead to hostilities endangering world peace.

The Greek press reflects nationwide interest particularly in Soviet reactions. But despite general approval of U.S. moves, some apprehension is cropping up over a potential outbreak of war. The pro-government Messimvrini wrote that people "instinctively react against the idea of mass suicide."

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Comment critical of U.S. actions still seems to permeate output. Mixed into this are scattered acknowledgments that the Soviet Union is also to blame for the current crisis.

In Greece, the pro-government Messimvrini speaks of the "agony of the human race" in a crisis that is by far not over. The Opposition Athinaiki expresses "deep hope," for it finds it inconceivable that mankind will annihilate itself. The paper points out hopefully that "Kennedy is [no] McCarthy nor Khrushchev a Stalin."

From Turkey comes approval of U.S. actions, as well as assurances that missiles in the country are no threat to its neighbors. An Adalet editorial points out that "in her international relations Turkey will always be true to her friends and agreements and will stay that way."

Lebanese observers believe the Soviets are backing down, but the pro-UAR press echoes Cairo in saying that all foreign bases are bad. However, the bulk of Lebanese opinion is reportedly jubilant about a so-called great free-world victory.

The UAR is officially concerned with the spade work to be done in the UN in a search for a solution through negotiations.

The bulk of Pakistan's editorial comment is negative. Some papers do blame the USSR for events, but most hold the U.S. responsible. In the absence of official reactions there are indications that key individuals continue to voice approval of the U.S. course.

AFRICA

Scattered returns from the area are headed by Liberian official support for the U.S. President Tubman said that the U.S. quarantine is justified.

From Somali, some papers are cited: Corriere carried world reactions briefs, all against the U.S. Other press sources play events straight without editorial comment.

In Nigeria the national dailies have so far not carried any editorial reaction. The Lagos Daily Telegraph condemns Cuba for its willingness to become a "dangerous steppingstone of international communism." And the Independent Daily Times leavened its balanced play with a cartoon showing a reluctant President being forced into action by belligerent Americans.

2

WESTERN EUROPE

West German press comment shows "diminishing nervousness about the possibilities of a direct clash" in the Caribbean or Berlin, according to our Embassy in Bonn. There is an increased expectation of negotiations. The President's decision still has general approval.

Two Frankfurt papers discuss the preoccupation over a connection between Berlin and Cuba. The pro-government Frankfurter Neue Presse said the U.S. action was aimed not only at eliminating a Soviet bridgehead in the Caribbean but at thwarting a Soviet Berlin plan. The right-center Frankfurter Allgemeine expresses an opinion that the Soviets now would find the risks of retaliating in Berlin too great.

Several papers hint at the possibility of a deal to scrap U.S. foreign bases considered obsolete, in return for the dismantling of Soviet missiles in Cuba. The Frankfurter Rundschau headlines a story saying Washington is considering this.

The West Berlin press highlights Soviet ship movements and discusses possible negotiations, including a Summit. Editorials are optimistic that the Soviets will avoid war. One paper commented that U.S. determination brought lasting peace closer; another predicted a brighter future for Berlin; a third recalled Roosevelt's use of the term "quarantine" in referring to the Axis in the late 1930's.

A few European demonstrations were reported yesterday and last night.

A crowd of 500 assembled in Paris in the Place de la Concorde, chanting "Peace in Cuba" and "Hands off Cuba." Truckloads of armed gendarmes controlled them, escorting several groups through the gate to present petitions to an Embassy official.

The Embassy in London received 200 letters and petitions yesterday, the morning after a demonstration. The majority of letters condemn U.S. action and equate U.S. missile bases with Soviet rockets in Cuba.

University students entered into the spirit of the moment. In Oslo, they organized a counter-demonstration Wednesday to quell a leftist anti-U.S. march. Yesterday Oxford student factions battled. Half of them shouted "Hands off Cuba" and the other half, shouted, "We Back Jack."